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[North] Korea

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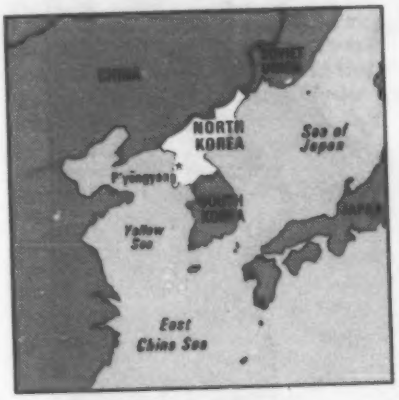

Official Name: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

PROFILE

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*—Korean(s). **Population** (1985 est.): 20 million. **Annual growth rate:** 2.3%. **Ethnic group:** Korean. **Religion:** Buddhism, Shamanism; religious activities have been essentially nonexistent since 1945. **Language:** Korean. **Education:** *Years compulsory*—11. *Attendance*—3 million (primary, 1.5 million, secondary, 1.2 million, tertiary, 0.3 million). *Literacy* (est.)—99%.

Health: Medical treatment is free; one doctor for every 600 inhabitants; one hospital bed for every 350. *Infant mortality rate*—30/1,000. *Life expectancy*—65.6 yrs.

Geography

Area: 121,730 sq. km. (47,000 sq. miles), about the size of Mississippi. **Cities:** *Capital*—Pyongyang. *Other cities*—Chongjin, Wonsan, Nampo, and Kaesong. **Terrain:** Numerous ranges of moderately high and partially forested mountains and hills separated by deep, narrow valleys and small cultivated plains. **Climate:** Temperate.

Government

Type: Communist state, one-leader rule. **Independence:** September 9, 1948. **Constitution:** 1948, revised 1972.

Branches: *Executive*—president (chief of state); premier (head of government). *Legislative*—Supreme People's Assembly. *Judicial*—Supreme Court, Provincial, city, county, and military courts (subordinate to Supreme People's Assembly).

Subdivisions: 9 provinces, 4 province-level municipalities—Pyongyang, Kaesong, Chongjin, Nampo.

Political parties: Korean Workers' (communist) Party. **Suffrage:** Universal at age 17.

Defense (1985 est.): Over 20% of GNP, with about 12% of men ages 17-49 in the regular armed forces.

Holidays: National Day, Independence Day, September 9; Kim Il Sung's birthday, April 15; other holidays.

Flag: Two blue horizontal stripes at the top and bottom; two white narrow stripes; and a wide center band on which appears a red star in a white circle.

Economy*

GNP (1984 est.): $23 billion. **Per capita GNP** (1984): $1,175.

Agriculture (including forestry and fishing, 1982—25% of GNP): *Products*—rice, corn, potatoes, fruits, vegetables, and tobacco.

Industry (including mining and manufacturing, 1982—70% of GNP): *Types*—steel, cement, textiles, petrochemicals, machines.

Trade (1983): *Exports*—$1.4 billion: machinery and equipment, iron, steel, metal ores, nonferrous metals, nonmetallic minerals, textile fibers, chemicals, foodstuffs. *Imports*—$1.5 billion: machinery and equipment, petroleum, foodstuffs, coking coal. *Major partners*—USSR, PRC, East European nations, Japan, West Germany, France (about 54% is with communist countries).

Official exchange rate: 2 won = US$1.

Membership in International Organizations

Official observer status at UN—Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Postal Union (IPU), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Development Program (UNDP), UNESCO, World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Maritime Organization (IMO); IRCS, Nonaligned Movement.

*In most cases, the figures used here are estimates based upon incomplete data and projections.

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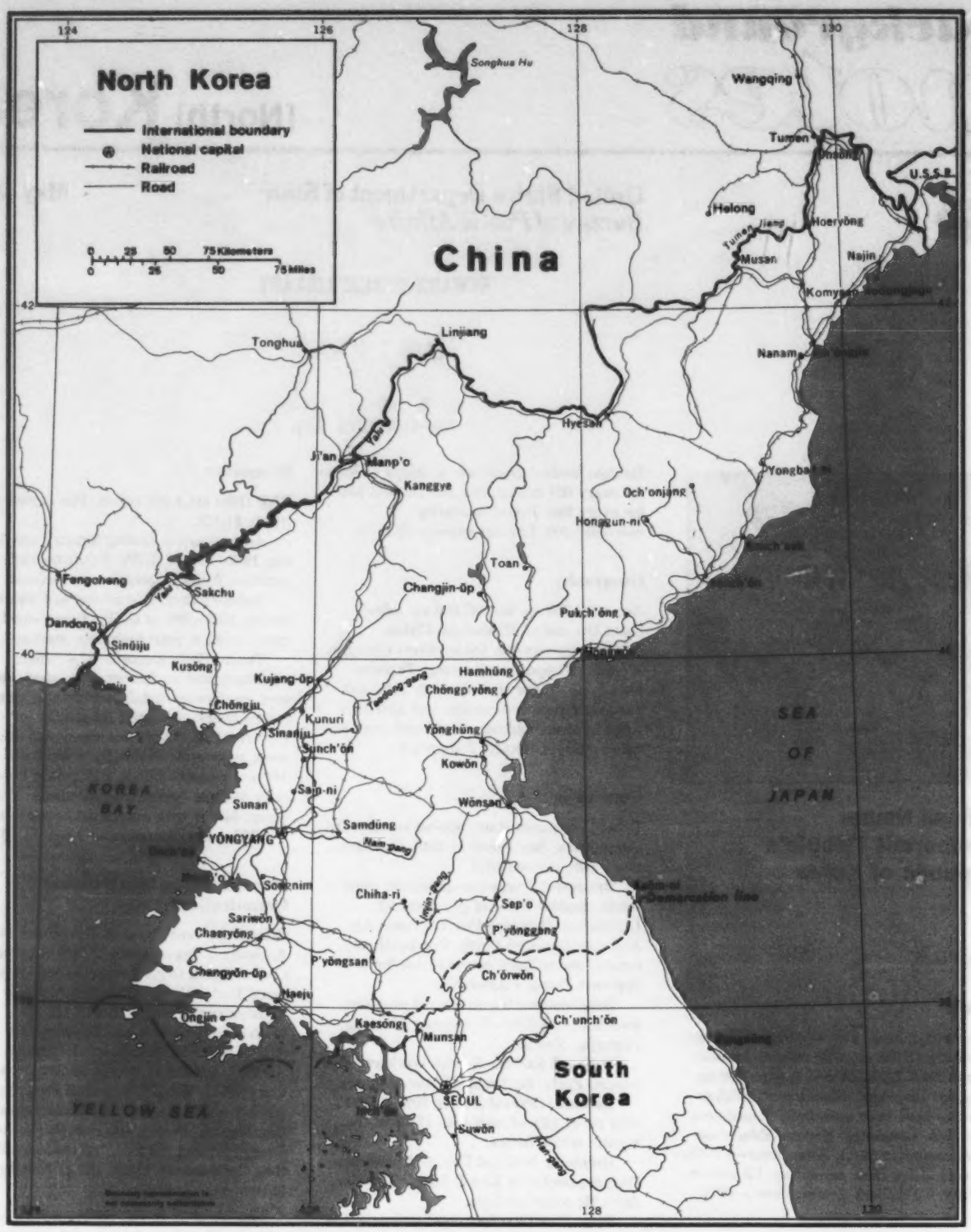
North Korea
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Wangqing
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Helong
Hoeryŏng
Tumen Jiang
Musan
Najin
Komyŏng-dong
Linjiang
Tonghua
Nanam
Hyesan
Ji'an
Manp'o
Yalu
Kanggye
Yongbaek-ni
Och'onjang
Hongwŏn-ni
Toan
Changjin-ŭp
Fengchang
Sakchu
Dandong
Sinŭiju
Pukch'ŏng
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Kunuri
Taedong gang
Sinanju
Yŏnghŭng
Sunch'ŏn
Kowŏn
Sain-ni
Sunan
Wŏnsan
Samdŭng
PYONGYANG
Han gang
Sonchnim
Chiha-ri
Imjin gang
Sariwŏn
Sep'o
Chaeryŏng
P'yŏnggang
Changyŏn-ŭp
P'yŏngsan
Ch'ŏrwŏn
Haeju
Ongjin
Kaesŏng
Munsan
Ch'unch'ŏn
SEOUL
Suwŏn
Han gang
124
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128
130
42
40

GEOGRAPHY

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) occupies the northern portion of a mountainous peninsula about 966 kilometers (600 mi.) long and 217 kilometers (135 mi.) wide, projecting southeast from China, between the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea (known in Korea as, respectively, the East Sea and West Sea). Japan lies about 193 kilometers (120 mi.) east of the peninsula, across the Sea of Japan. North Korea shares common borders with the People's Republic of China—along the Yalu and Tumen Rivers—and with the Soviet Union—along the Tumen River. The boundary with South Korea is formed by the military demarcation line (MDL), marking the line of separation between the belligerent sides at the close of the Korean war. A demilitarized zone (DMZ) extends for 2,000 meters (just over a mile) on either side of the MDL. Both the North and South Korean Governments hold that the MDL is not a permanent border but a temporary administrative line.

North Korea's terrain consists of numerous ranges of moderately high and partially forested mountains and hills separated by deep, narrow valleys and small cultivated plains. The most rugged areas are the north and east coasts. Good harbors are found on the eastern coast. Pyongyang, the capital, is located near the country's west coast.

The climate is temperate. July and August are normally the warmest months, with temperatures averaging 30°C (85°F) at Pyongyang. Rainfall is concentrated in the summer months, usually occurring in June and July. January is the coldest; temperatures often drop below –20°C (–4°F). Snowfall is generally light, but the ground is covered for long periods.

PEOPLE

Korea was first populated by a Tungusic branch of the Ural-Altaic family, which migrated to the peninsula from the northwestern regions of Asia. Some of these peoples also populated parts of northeast China (Manchuria), and Koreans and Manchurians still show physical similarities—in their height, for example. Koreans are racially and linguistically homogeneous, with no indigenous minorities.

The population is unevenly distributed, with greater concentrations in the fertile plains than in mountainous areas. Between 1925 and 1940, the Japanese colonial administration in Korea concentrated its industrial development efforts in the comparatively underpopulated and resource-rich north, resulting in a considerable movement of people northward from the agrarian southern provinces. This trend was reversed after the end of the World War II, when more than 2 million Koreans moved from the north to the south following the division of the peninsula into U.S. and Soviet military zones of administration. This southward migration continued after the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea) in 1948, and during the Korean war (1950–53). Korea's population and population density are now unequally divided, with 40 million people in the territorially smaller south (38,000 sq. mi.) and 20 million in the north (47,000 sq. mi.).

Language

Korean is a Uralic language, remotely related to Japanese, Mongolian, Hungarian, and Finnish. Although there are dialects, the Korean spoken throughout the peninsula is mutually comprehensible. Chinese characters were used to write Korean before the invention of the Korean Hangul alphabet in the 15th century. These characters are still in limited use in South Korea; North Korea uses Hangul, exclusively.

Religion

Korea's traditional religions are Buddhism and Shamanism. Christian missionaries arrived in the 19th century and founded schools, hospitals, and other modern institutions throughout Korea. Major centers of missionary activity included Seoul and Pyongyang. Although religious groups nominally exist in North Korea, the preponderance of evidence indicates that the government allows these groups to exist only for the sake of its international image; it actively discourages all forms of religious observance.

HISTORY

According to legend, the god-king Tangun founded the Korean nation in 2333 B.C., after which his descendants reigned over a peaceful kingdom for more than a millennium. By the first century A.D., the Korean Peninsula, known as Chosun ("morning calm"), was divided into the kingdoms of Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche. In A.D. 668, the peninsula was unified under the Silla kingdom. Its rulership was taken over in 918 by the Koryo dynasty (from which is derived the Western name "Korea"). The Yi dynasty, which supplanted Koryo in 1392, lasted until the Japanese annexed Korea in 1910.

Throughout most of its history Korea has been invaded, influenced, and fought over by its larger neighbors. Major Japanese invasions occurred in 1592 and 1597, and the Chinese attacked in 1627. To protect themselves from such constant buffeting, the Yi kings finally adopted a closed-door policy, earning Korea the title of "Hermit Kingdom." Though the Yi's showed nominal fealty to the Chinese throne, Korea was, in fact, independent until the late 19th century, when Japanese influence became predominant.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian competition in Northeast Asia led to armed conflict. Having defeated its two competitors, Japan established dominance in Korea. The Japanese colonial era was characterized by virtually total control from Tokyo and by ruthless efforts to replace the Korean language and culture with those of the colonial power.

As World War II neared an end, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed at Yalta that Japanese forces in Korea would surrender to the United States south of the 38th parallel and to the Soviet Union north of that line. This division was intended as a temporary administrative measure only. However, in 1946–47, the Soviet administration in the north refused to allow free consultations with representatives of all groups of the Korean people for the purpose of establishing a national government, and the United States and the Soviet Union subsequently were unable to agree on a unification formula.

Korean War

In the face of communist refusal to comply with the UN General Assembly resolution of November 1947, calling for UN-supervised elections throughout Korea, elections were carried out under UN observation in the U.S. zone of occupation, and on August 15, 1948, the

Republic of Korea was established. The republic's first president was the prominent Korean nationalist, Syngman Rhee. In September 1948, the Soviet Union established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north under Kim Il Sung, a former guerrilla who, by some accounts, served during World War II as a Soviet Army major. Although Kim claimed authority over the entire peninsula, the UN General Assembly, on December 12, 1948, declared the Republic of Korea to be the only lawful government in Korea.

The United States withdrew its military forces from Korea in 1949. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. In response, the United Nations, in accordance with the terms of its Charter, engaged in its first collective action through the establishment of the UN Command (UNC), to which 16 member nations sent troops and assistance. At the request of the UN Secretary General, this international effort was led by the United States, which contributed the largest contingent. UN forces initially succeeded in advancing almost to the Yalu River, which divides the Korean Peninsula from China; however, there, large numbers of "people's volunteers" from the army of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) had joined North Korean forces. In December 1950, a major Chinese attack forced UN troops to withdraw southward. The battle line then fluctuated up and down the peninsula until the late spring of 1951, when it stabilized north of Seoul near the 38th parallel.

Armistice negotiations began in July 1951, but hostilities continued until July 27, 1953, when, at the village of Panmunjom, the military commanders of the North Korean forces, the Chinese people's volunteers, and the UNC signed an armistice agreement. Neither the United States nor South Korea is a signatory of the armistice per se, though both adhere to it through the UNC. No comprehensive peace agreement has ever replaced the 1953 armistice agreement, which remains in force. A Military Armistice Commission composed of 10 members, 5 appointed by each side, is empowered to supervise implementation of the terms of the armistice.

The armistice called for an international conference to find a political solution to the problem of Korea's division. This conference met at Geneva in April 1954 but, after 7 weeks of futile debate, ended inconclusively.

Reunification Policy

North Korea has pursued its goal of reunification by regular and irregular military measures and by negotiations.

Military Measures. Although North Korea did not take advantage of political turmoil in the South in the early 1960s to launch a military attack of "liberation," it subsequently perpetrated a number of violent acts across the demilitarized zone and in South Korea, which were directed both at U.S. and South Korean forces and South Korean Government officials. These efforts included the 1968 infiltration into Seoul by a 31-agent team, which attempted to assassinate President Park, the seizure 2 days later of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* while it was in international waters and the subsequent imprisonment and torture of its crew, and the shooting down of an unarmed U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft. North Korea is also thought to have dispatched the assassin who, while attempting to kill President Park in 1974, killed Mrs. Park Chung Hee, South Korea's First Lady. In 1976, North Korean troops, wielding axes, killed two U.S. Army officers in the DMZ.

In the early 1970s, although the North scaled back its infiltration and sabotage against the South, it began a major long-term conventional military buildup. The extent of this buildup did not become evident to the outside world until the late 1970s. North Korea now has the fifth largest army in the world. The disparity between the North and South Korean forces, which resulted from this military expansion, led the U.S. Government in mid-1979 to cancel planned withdrawals of U.S. ground combat forces from South Korea.

The comparative military balance continues to favor the North. The North has about 850,000 armed personnel, compared to about 600,000 in the South. North Korean forces are well equipped and have a substantial advantage (at least 2-to-1) in several key categories of offensive weapons: tanks, long-range artillery, and armored personnel carriers. The North has perhaps the world's second largest commando force (after the Soviet Union) designed for insertion behind the lines in wartime. North Korea also has more than twice as many combat aircraft than the South, although South Korean/U.S. forces have the qualitative edge. North Korean exercises have revealed impressive sophistication in terms of joint and combined forces operations.

In addition to their size and capabilities, the challenge posed by North Korean forces is compounded by factors of time and distance. The bulk of North Korean forces are deployed well forward, along the DMZ and, recently, North Korea has begun to move even more of its rear echelon troops to hardened bunkers much closer to the DMZ. Given the proximity of Seoul to the DMZ (some 25 miles), South Korean and U.S. forces are presented with an extremely difficult indications and warning problem. Consequently, a high state of readiness is required at all times. The U.S. Government continues to believe that the U.S. troop presence in South Korea remains an important deterrent against North Korean aggression.

North Korea's continued, though intermittent, infiltration and sabotage actions against the South in recent years include construction of several military tunnels deep under the DMZ. This tunneling effort continues. In October 1983, North Korean Army officers set off a bomb in Rangoon, Burma, killing 17 members of an official South Korean delegation and 4 Burmese. Although President Chun escaped harm, four South Korean cabinet ministers and several senior advisers were among those slain.

Negotiating Efforts Between the Two Koreas. Throughout the postwar period, both Korean Governments have repeatedly affirmed their desire to reunify the Korean Peninsula, but until 1971 no direct communications or any other contacts took place between the two governments or their citizens except through the Military Armistice Commission.

In August 1971, North and South Korea agreed to hold talks through their respective Red Cross societies with the stated aim of reuniting the many Korean families separated following the division of Korea and the Korean war. Following a secret meeting on July 4, 1972, both countries announced an agreement to work toward national reunification through peaceful means and to end the hostile atmosphere that had formerly prevailed. Although officials exchanged visits and regular communications were established through a North-South Coordinating Committee and the Red Cross, no substantive

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progress was made. The contacts quickly broke down and were finally ended by the North. The breakdown reflected basic differences in approach, with Pyongyang insisting that immediate steps toward reunification be taken before discussion of specific issues and Seoul maintaining that, given the two sides' long history of violence, any realistic approach to reunification must be a gradual, step-by-step process.

President Chun repeatedly has suggested a summit meeting with President Kim to discuss any and all proposals, an agreement to normalize inter-Korean relations pending reunification, and other specific measures to reduce tensions and promote humanitarian and cultural exchanges. In turn, Kim Il Sung has periodically reiterated his 1980 proposal for a grand national conference to establish a Confederal Korean Republic.

In his January 1982 proposals, President Chun, for the first time, addressed the central political issue. He proposed that the North and South organize a conference to draft a constitution for a unified democratic Korean republic. South Korea intends to present its draft of a constitution and urges the North to do likewise. South Korea maintains that a meaningful dialogue should be based on *de facto* recognition of each other's existing political, social, and economic systems. South Korea supports the recognition of both Koreas by the major powers in the region (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., P.R.C., and Japan), and the admission of both Koreas to the United Nations pending peaceful reunification. North Korea rejects these ideas on the grounds that they would perpetuate the peninsula's division.

Tension between North and South Korea increased dramatically in the aftermath of the October 9, 1983, North Korean assassination attempt on President Chun in Burma. North-South sports talks the following spring became acrimonious over the Rangoon bombing, and Pyongyang ultimately boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics. South Korea's suspicions of the North's motives were not diminished by Pyongyang's proposal for "tripartite" talks on the future of the Korean Peninsula. This initiative, made public on January 10, 1984, called for talks with the United States, in which "South Korean authorities" would be permitted to participate. The tripartite talks would replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty, which would provide for withdrawal of all U.S. troops and issue a declaration of nonaggression between North and South.

North Korea's offer to provide relief goods to victims of severe flooding in South Korea in September 1984—and South Korean acceptance—signaled the beginning of renewed dialogue between the two parties. Since then, both sides have begun discussions on a variety of fronts: Red Cross talks that address the plight of family members separated by the division of Korea; economic/trade talks; and parliamentary talks. In addition, both sides have met under International Olympic Committee auspices to discuss cooperative ways of approaching the 1988 Summer Olympics to be held in Seoul. Little progress has emerged from these discussions so far, but they appear to offer the greatest hope for reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

GOVERNMENT

North Korea has a strongly centralized government under the complete control of the Korean Workers' (communist) Party. It is dominated by one man, Kim Il Sung, who, in addition to his titles of general secretary of the KWP and president of North Korea, is generally referred to as "Great Leader." A few minor parties are allowed to exist in name only, presumably to present a facade of representative government to the outside world.

In December 1972, the Fifth Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) ratified a new constitution replacing that of 1948. The 1972 constitution created the position of President of North Korea and a high-level government agency, the Central People's Committee (CPC). In theory, the SPA, North Korea's legislature, is the highest organ of state power. The constitution states that members are elected every 4 years. In the past, usually only two meetings were held annually, each lasting a few days. A Standing Committee of 19 members elected by the SPA performs legislative functions when the assembly is not in session. In reality, the assembly serves only to ratify decisions made in other communist party and government bodies. The constitution designates the Central People's Committee as the government's top policymaking body. Headed by the President of North Korea, who also nominates the other 24 committee members, the CPC makes high-level policy decisions and supervises the Cabinet (State Administration Council). The council is headed by a premier and is the dominant administrative and executive branch of government. The judiciary is subordinate to the Supreme People's Assembly. The SPA's Standing Committee appoints judges to the state's highest court for 4-year terms concurrent with that of the assembly.

Politically, North Korea is divided into nine provinces and four provincial-level municipalities—Pyongyang, Chongjin, Nampo, and Kaesong. It also appears to be divided into nine military districts.

Little is known about the actual lines of power and authority in the North Korean Government despite the formal structure set forth in the constitution. It is clear, however, that 74-year-old Kim Il Sung, who has ruled North Korea continuously since the government's establishment in 1948, wields dictatorial power. Kim and a group of long-time associates, all ranking members of the Korean Workers' Party, dominate the government and the economy through an elaborate party structure and through the civilian and military bureaucracies. This group of officials holds positions in both government and party structures. Kim Il Sung is the object of an intensive and far-reaching personality cult, probably unequaled in the rest of today's world. A similar cult has been developing around President Kim's son, Kim Chong Il, 44, who is being groomed to succeed his father. Many observers now credit the younger Kim with day-to-day running of domestic affairs.

Principal Government Officials

President and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party—**Kim** Il Sung

Vice Presidents

Pak Song-ch'ol
Yim Chun-chu
Yi Chong-ok

Premier—**Kang** Song-san

Vice Premiers (in order of rank)

Yon Hyong-muk
Kim Yong-nam
Kim Pok-sin
Chong Chun-ki
Ch'oe Kwang
Cho Se-ung
Hong Song-nam
Hong Si-hak
Kim Ch'ang-chu

Ministers

Foreign Affairs—**Kim** Yong-nam
People's Armed Forces—**O** Chin-u

ECONOMY

The division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945 resulted in imbalances of natural and human resources, with disadvantages for both the North and South. By most economic measures, after partition the North was left better off in terms of industry and natural resources. The South, however, had two-thirds of the work force. In 1945, about 65% of Korean heavy industry was in the North, but only 31% of light industry, 37% of agriculture, and 18% of the peninsula's total commerce.

North and South both suffered from the massive destruction caused by the Korean war. Since that time, North Korea's command economy has concentrated its labor force (estimated at 6.1 million in 1980) and natural resources on an effort to achieve rapid economic development. The regime has been assisted by large amounts of aid from other communist countries, notably the Soviet Union and China. This aid was particularly effective in the years immediately following the end of the Korean war, when the economy experienced a high growth rate.

During the early 1970s, North Korea, probably noting the more rapid economic development of the South, attempted a large-scale modernization program through the importation of Western technology, principally in the heavy industrial sectors of the economy. By the end of 1976, the North's hard-currency debt had reached $1.6 billion, about six times the average annual hard-currency exports. It also owed at least another $1 billion to communist creditors. Unable to finance its debt through exports, it became the first communist country to default on its loans from free market countries. In 1979, North Korea was able to renegotiate much of its international debt, but in 1980, it defaulted again on all of its loans except those from Japan. Despite intermittent efforts to address its foreign debt, North Korea remains in default to Western creditors on an estimated $1.5 billion.

Largely because of these debt problems but also because of a prolonged drought, North Korea's industrial growth slowed in 1976, and Pyongyang fell short of many of its 6-year plan's industrial targets. In 1976, for the first time, the North's per capita GNP fell below that of the South, and by the end of 1979, per capita GNP in the North was only about one-third of that in the South. Although the causes for this relatively poor performance are complex, a major factor is the disproportionately large percentage of GNP (over 20%) that the North devotes to the military.

In April 1982, Kim Il Sung announced a new economic policy giving priority to increased agricultural production through land reclamation, development of the country's infrastructure—especially power plants and transportation facilities—and reliance on domestically produced equipment. More recently, there have been signs of a shift in policy emphasis toward expanding trade. In September 1984, North Korea promulgated a joint venture law to attract foreign capital and technology. To date North Korea's default on its foreign debt is in large measure responsible for scant foreign interest in joint ventures. The new emphasis on expanding trade and acquiring technology has not shifted internal economic priorities away from support of military industry. In fact, North Korea secretly and illegally acquired 87 U.S.-made Hughes helicopters during 1983–84 in order to improve its military capabilities vis-a-vis South Korea. The United States views illegal acquisition of U.S. equipment and technology with concern. The 1983–84 diversion is the subject of an investigation by Federal authorities.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

After 1945, the Soviet Union supplied the economic and military aid that enabled the North Koreans to mount their invasion of the South in 1950. Soviet aid and influence continued at a high level during the war; after hostilities ended, it was in large part responsible for rebuilding North Korea's economy. However, the assistance of Chinese "volunteers" during the war and the presence of these troops until 1958, gave Beijing considerable influence in Pyongyang. In 1961, North Korea concluded formal mutual security treaties with the Soviet Union and China, which continue in force.

Recent events, such as the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, the Soviet-backed Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, created strains in North Korea's relations with each of the two major communist powers. Pyongyang generally has tried to maintain an equidistant position between Moscow and Beijing, obtaining aid from both and avoiding dependence on either. During the past 2 years Pyongyang has strengthened its ties with Moscow. The Soviets reportedly are increasing economic assistance and have provided advanced MiG–23 planes to North Korea. Still, Pyongyang and Beijing continue frequent leadership consultations, a sign that ties continue to be close.

Despite reliance on Soviet and Chinese aid and its strong orientation toward other communist nations, North Korea proclaims a militantly independent stance in its foreign policy in accordance with President Kim's continued emphasis on the doctrine of self-reliance. Pyongyang seeks to enlarge its representation abroad wherever possible and has had some success in the past decade. However, following the October 1983 assassination attempt on the South Korean President in Rangoon, Burma, the Burmese Government broke relations with North Korea, and several other governments followed suit. Moreover, various incidents, mostly smuggling and blackmarketing offenses by North Korean diplomats, have caused some countries to be reluctant to open relations with North Korea and others to expel or decline to admit North Korean missions. North Korea has increasingly emphasized its relations with other members of the Third World and aspires to a leadership role in the Nonaligned Movement. As of February 1986, North Korea had diplomatic relations with 103 countries, South Korea with 122, and 67 nations had diplomatic relations with both Koreas.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

The United States maintains no representation and conducts no trade with North Korea. Financial and commercial transactions by persons or firms subject to U.S. jurisdiction are prohibited under U.S. law except under license by the Secretary of the Treasury. There are no restrictions on travel by private U.S. citizens to North Korea.

The U.S. Government supports the principle of peaceful reunification of Korea. It has long been the position of the U.S. Government that the future of the Korean Peninsula is primarily a mat-

ter for the people of Korea to decide. The United States therefore believes that a constructive and serious dialogue between the authorities of South and North Korea is necessary to resolve the issues on the Korean Peninsula, and that concrete steps to promote greater understanding and reduce tension are needed to pave the way for reunifying the Korean nation. Because the United States believes that the fundamental decisions must be taken by the Korean people themselves, it has refused to be drawn into separate negotiations with North Korea, as Pyongyang has suggested, on replacing the armistice agreement with a peace treaty. The United States is prepared to participate in any discussions between the representatives of North and South Korea, if so desired by both Korean Governments and provided that both are full and equal participants in any such talks. ■

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